



## DEATHBED ETIQUETTE

Be attentive to what your loved one wants – you are there to support them.

If something concerns you about your loved one, seek out help or advice.

Sitting at the bedside can be exhausting so try to eat, drink and take regular breaks.

Aim to create some personal space around the bed, particularly if your loved one is in hospital.

Don't feel you have to sit in silence – gentle background conversation or music can be comforting.

Organise a regular email or set up a WhatsApp group to update family and friends.

Consider bringing small children for a brief visit and inviting older ones.

Let your loved one sleep – they may be sleeping a lot in the last days.

The dying person may speak about dead relatives coming to meet them – listen and don't be afraid.

Remember those important last words that you, and they, might like to say: 'thank you, I'm sorry, I love you.'

Holding your loved one's hand is often more powerful than words.

Don't be surprised if your loved one dies when you are out of the room – it happens a lot.

Be prepared for a change in breathing patterns – it's normal for your loved one to stop breathing and then restart and this may sound like a gasp. It indicates the terminal phase of their illness.

Be prepared also for their breathing to sound laboured and for a gurgling sound caused by fluid building up at the back of their throat.

Reassure your loved one that they are free to let go – this 'permission' is often taken.

